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ABSTRACT

Plans for the implementation of career education in the elementary schools of Oregon focus on career awareness through emphasis on the producer role in relation to other life roles. The guidelines briefly cover: program administration and coordination, student outcomes (curriculum tenets, assumptions, and outcomes, providing broad objectives to assist teachers in the formulation of a career education curriculum and related activities), and staff development (teacher competencies, planning staff development, and supplemental staff activities). A glossary of terms and a list of the members of the ad hoc advisory committee for career awareness guidelines for Oregon are included. (EC)

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IMPLEMENTING
CAREER AWARENESS
IN
THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



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OVERVIEW OF CAREER EDUCATION

A society's survival is dependent on how well its members perform certain roles. The Oregon State Board of Education, in cooperation with the educational community, has identified six important life roles in which students should demonstrate proficiency. They are learner, individual, producer, citizen, consumer, and family member.

A comprehensive learning system must provide opportunities for each student to explore and prepare for these and other roles at the appropriate interest and comprehension level. These life roles are a framework for a contemporary curriculum.

Career education, as an integral part of the curriculum, presents the concept that each individual must learn to function effectively in the identified life roles. The major focus of career education, however, is the role of producer. Learning experiences within the curriculum should be provided to develop the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that will help students become aware of the many careers through which to fulfill the role of producer and which enable them to perform successfully in the occupation of their choice. The development of the ability to perform as a producer will assist each student in the other related life roles.

Career education in Oregon encompasses learning experiences from the elementary through the post-secondary levels, and has three primary objectives: (1) promote learning about self in the world of work; (2) provide opportunities to explore occupational fields; and (3) provide opportunities for career preparation leading to employment and/or further training.

The complete career education program begins with the students' earliest schooling experiences and extends through their adult life. It encompasses:

The development of *Career Awareness*, usually in grades K-6 but also provided at other levels for students who are at that point in their career development.

Opportunities for *Career Exploration*, emphasized in grades 7 through 10 but also available to all secondary, post-secondary, and adult students.

Occupational Preparation centering on career cluster programs at the 11th and 12th grade levels.

Occupational Specialization through occupational preparatory and supplementary programs usually offered through community colleges, apprenticeships, private vocational-technical schools and four-year colleges and universities.

Career Guidance services available at all levels to give continuity to the students' career development.

CAREER AWARENESS AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Career education objectives are manifest at the elementary level as career awareness. Under a career-focused curriculum, career awareness is not a separate subject but is developed in each classroom within traditional subject matter areas. The scope of each subject changes to incorporate the many occupational careers related to the topic being studied.

As with the entire career education program, career awareness emphasizes the producer role and its relationship with other life roles. Moreover, the dignity of all work is stressed by

examining the contributions of a variety of occupations to society. The student is the focal point of career awareness learning activities intended to implement the career development process. As a departure point, students are encouraged to examine personal needs in relation to various occupations.

An awareness program provides opportunities for learners to participate actively in:

Making decisions that relate to their career development.

Discovering their occupational aptitudes and interests.

Developing their individual learning styles—the ways they learn best.

Expressing their self-awareness as it relates to career development, occupational interest, and the role of the producer.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND COORDINATION

School districts have submitted long-range plans to establish career education as a part of the curriculum. Individual elementary schools should be encouraged to develop plans for the career awareness component that supports the district's long-range philosophy and program for career education. Each plan should prescribe opportunities through which students can acquire knowledge about work, self, occupational roles, decision-making skills, communication, and physical and mental skills related to careers. The section on student outcomes on page three suggests the instructional objectives which the career awareness program should be designed to meet. To insure that implementation will occur, the long- and short-range plan should be developed by the staff with active participation by district administrative personnel.

An emphasis on assessment and evaluation should prevail throughout the development of the career awareness program, even though some of the student outcomes are not easily measured. It can be assumed that certain outcomes may not be observable until later in the student's life; but it will be helpful to develop a method by which a student's experiences and progress can be recorded.

Administrative organizational patterns should be developed to assist in the implementation of the planned program. District administrators should have the opportunity to supply and interpret data on curriculum development. Experience suggests that three major ideas support successful curriculum change:

1. Each individual's job needs to be defined and should include expected program outcomes.
2. Staff members should participate in the decision-making process of the organization.
3. Staff autonomy and creativity is a necessary component to allow individuals to manage their own jobs.

Research and exemplary projects in career education conducted in Oregon have demonstrated the value of considering the following practices in planning for program coordination:

One administrator should coordinate the entire district program.

Final responsibility for individual building programs lies with the principal.

A building coordinator, with teaching experience, should be appointed for each elementary building. This person must have allocated time and a clear definition of responsibilities and authority. The staff should participate in the development of the job description and the selection of the coordinator.

Community resources are vital to the awareness program. They must be used to acquaint the students with the community of which they are a part. Interviews, field trips, and speakers will enhance students' awareness of their surroundings. A planned approach to the use of community resources that eliminates duplication and provides coordination is imperative. The plan should provide for coordination with other district educational programs which may be using community resources.

Liaison should be maintained with the district or area Career Education Advisory Committee.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

This section will help teachers build a curriculum based on broad objectives. Teachers should develop specific learning activities to develop the broad objectives.

Curriculum Tenets

There are four curriculum tenets inherent in the student outcomes:

1. Students should be provided opportunities to develop attitudes and acquire knowledge about the world of work.
2. Students should be able to identify their individuality and continue to develop a relationship with an occupational role.
3. Students should experience activities in decision-making, communicating, and creating as related to the world of work.
4. Students should develop physical and mental skills related to careers.

Assumptions

The student outcomes expressed below are founded on certain assumptions, i.e., each student is:

Unique, with individual needs and aspirations.

A separate personality with the right to pursue individual potential.

Likely to participate if given a meaningful role in the educational process.

Capable of participating in methods of inquiry.

Capable of learning by discovery.

Able to acquire technical knowledge regarding an occupational role.

A time frame for the student outcomes is suggested, such as, "by the end of grade three" and "by the end of grade six." The third and sixth grades should be viewed as check points in the student's career development. School districts should adapt these objectives to their situation.

Outcomes

1. Students should be provided opportunities to develop attitudes and acquire knowledge about the world of work.

By the end of the third grade, students will be able to:

Identify and describe the roles of family members.

Begin to understand the relationship of the producer life role to family, citizen, consumer, individual and learner life roles.

Identify parents' occupation(s).

Describe where parents work.

Identify and describe various tasks the student performs within the family.

Begin to identify workers in the community.

Recognize that some work requires individual effort and other work requires group participation.

Understand the need for a monetary system.

Recognize why most members in a community seek work.

By the end of the sixth grade, students will be able to do such things as:

Identify the work of others and realize an individual's dependence on other members of the community.

Understand that the home environment is a factor in career development.

Move from identification of workers to an understanding of work as a need of society.

Understand the community as a resource for career development.

Understand the school environment as a resource for career development.

Participate in an economic system and know the differences among production, distribution, and consumption.

Acquire and demonstrate knowledge about economics and its impact on the citizen, family, individual, producer, learner, and consumer life roles.

Be aware of a variety of careers for exploration in the junior high school.

Be aware of job classification systems and participate in activities that relate to the career cluster concept.

2. Students should be able to identify their individuality and continue to develop a relationship with an occupational role.

By the end of the third grade, students will be able to do such things as:

Describe self in relationship to family and school.

Describe the uniqueness of individuals and how individual uniqueness applies to the family, citizen, individual, producer, learner, and consumer life roles.

Begin to appreciate, understand, and function in a constructive manner in relationship to the physical environment.

Recognize acceptable behaviors in the home, school, and community.

Begin to develop interpersonal skills.

Recognize learning in school as one factor in career development.

By the end of the sixth grade, students will be able to do such things as:

Identify additional interpersonal skills and understand how these skills affect the life roles.

Understand and identify strengths and weaknesses of individuals and how these characteristics affect job choices.

Recognize that different experiences may create different work habits and attitudes.

Evaluate personal strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes as they apply to present career interests.

3. Students should experience activities in decision-making, communicating, and creating as related to the world of work.

By the end of third grade, students will be able to do such things as:

Participate in play as formative exercise for future habits within the work role (e.g., creative and dramatic role playing).

Identify examples of interpersonal relationships.

Identify examples of decision-making in the career development process.

Identify and use basic methods of communication.

Develop an awareness of the need for creativity in many occupations.

By the end of sixth grade, students will be able to do such things as:

Identify and participate in a decision-making process.

Identify communication skills necessary in various occupations.

Develop an awareness of the way basic methods of communication help individuals complete work tasks and participate in life roles.

Identify examples of decision-making in the occupational role.

4. Students should develop physical and mental skills related to careers.

By the end of third grade, students will be able to do such things as:

Become aware that the world of work requires certain physical movements or skills.

Begin to identify and understand the relationships among classwork, activities, and choice in careers.

By the end of sixth grade, students will be able to do such things as:

Demonstrate that certain occupations require certain physical movements or skills.

Apply skills obtained to demonstrate:

job performance in the classroom.

the relationships of skills with careers.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Teacher Competencies

The teacher is the key element in designing and implementing a planned program of career awareness. Utilizing the following list of needed competencies, the administration should be able to assess the teachers' abilities and should provide a planned program of staff development. Each teacher must be able to:

Develop and utilize learning activities that foster desirable attitudes regarding the worth and function of work.

Understand the school district career education program and identify a personal role in that program.

Assist students in understanding that responsibility and decision-making are parts of the career development process.

Identify major occupations and job characteristics which relate to learner experience and interest.

Identify people in the community who are willing to talk about their occupations with students.

Recognize the direct application of competencies developed in the required subject areas to the producer life role.

Identify organizational patterns and levels of jobs in industry, business, and government, and discover ways in which they affect the individual worker.

In-service is the most important component in preparation for program implementation and operation. Following are some concepts to consider in organizing and conducting in-service programs:

Staff in-service can include all district elementary staff or just building personnel.

To maintain staff competencies, in-service should be continuous and self-renewing.

In-service at the district level should be informative as well as functional. The information received from these meetings provides content for building level meetings.

Building level in-service should stimulate creative curriculum development and activity-based program implementation.

Planning Staff Development

The following goals and objectives should be used as a guide in establishing a staff development program for a school or district. These objectives should be considered minimal. Individual schools and districts should supplement them with their specific goals and objectives.

GOAL 1: Develop an understanding of the scope and dimensions of career education.

Objectives:

Teachers will be able to:

Demonstrate that career education is their responsibility.

Identify and demonstrate the relationship of career awareness to exploration, career preparation, and career specialization.

Provide examples of career education as a developmental process.

GOAL 2: Develop a positive attitude about career awareness.

Objectives:

Teachers will be able to:

Demonstrate career awareness as an integral part of their existing curriculum.

Identify positive learning activities for classroom use.

Implement and assess activities related to career awareness.

GOAL 3: Develop the skills to evaluate career awareness.

Objectives:

Teachers will be able to:

Identify and implement strategies for evaluating the career awareness process.

Participate in a training program to provide skills in evaluation.

Collect, record, and interpret vital information for the evaluation process.

Supplemental Staff Activities

While in-service is the basic element of staff development, the effective use of other activities can increase staff competencies.

Consideration should be given to:

Short-term employment in business and industry.

Individual study and observation of workers on the job.

Individual research/study projects in such areas as institutional plans, visual aids, curriculum, etc.

Enrollment in credit career education courses.

Study of existing programs in other schools.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Advisory committee:	A group, usually from outside the field of education with current and substantial knowledge of jobs and occupations, selected to provide advice on technical matters for various career education programs.
Assessment:	A survey of the present condition of the total career education program.
Career cluster:	A grouping of occupations for career development purposes based on the identical and similar teachable skill and knowledge requirements they have in common. It is anticipated that 15-20 such groups will be representative of the spectrum of manpower needs and job opportunities.
Career development:	Sequential steps necessary to insure each student orderly progress toward a career goal. (Examples of career development tasks: [a] developing a positive concept, [b] understanding the decision-making process, [c] acquiring knowledge and skills in occupations and work settings.)
Career guidance:	That process which affords each student the opportunity to complete his career development tasks.
Community resources, facilities, equipment:	Those human and physical assets within the community that provide assistance to the school in carrying out their educational programs.
Evaluation:	A process within the system that measures whether the predetermined objectives of the career education program are being met.
Goal:	A broad statement of instructional intent.
Individualized instruction:	A delivery system which is performance based, individually paced, and designed to meet the learning needs and styles of individual students.
Interdisciplinary:	Activities which involve two or more disciplines that show the relationship and application of common competencies.
Key occupations:	Occupations that are representative of the community or segments of the labor force in respect to numbers employed and required competencies.
Long-range plan:	The career education developmental plan required by the State Board of Education. It must first have been approved by the district school board.

Staff competencies:

Knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and skills needed by the staff to operate a quality career education program.

Student outcomes:

Pupil performance in terms of predetermined objectives.

Work experience:

Activities of a student learner in a work environment that are supervised jointly by the school and the cooperating training agency.

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